1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 177-C]

the frequent moving of camp. According to Schebesta (1952, 80), the hut and the space in front are kept clean.

In leisure hours there are games and pastimes in which children and adults may take part, the dance being the most important. Schebesta (1952, 189 ff.) also mentions rope skipping; tug-of-war (often between men and women); *paliengbe*, an organized battle between men and women for a regime of plantains; and a form of gambling known as *mali*. The women and children have various string games as well.

The dance takes place on every possible occasion and is accompanied by drums made by the villagers. The emphasis in archer music (Schebesta, 1952, 190) is, as in the dance, on rhythm. Schebesta cites a number of musical instruments that are used by the archers for recreation, notably the drum, the musical bow, the sanza, the zither, and the *ruma* pipes.

Legend telling and mime are other important means of recreation mentioned by Schebesta (1952, 195). These, like most other recreational activities of adults, take place in the evening around the campfire. It is here, in any case, that the bachelors usually sleep (although Schebesta mentions the fact that there are bands in which bachelor huts are built), as do such of the married men as are under sexual taboo.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 178-C]

Dances are organized by the women to celebrate the birth of twins, whether or not both live. Schebesta (1948, 409) mentions the fact that, although the neighboring village tribes have similar feelings about abnormal births, they content themselves with evading unhappy consequences by magical dances and other rites. Schebesta (1948, 409) suggests that superstitious terror and fear of attendant sanctions drive the Pygmy mother to the more violent way of avoiding danger. He writes that all abnormal infants are also put to death immediately following birth, either by the mother or by her female attendants; the men are never permitted to see these monsters. They too are buried in the house, which is immediately abandoned. 845 [535] • 845 847

Postnatal Care

The mother surrounds her child with every care and attention until she again becomes pregnant, and even subsequently if the child is not yet able to look after itself to some extent. 846

[ARCHERS]

After giving birth, the mother keeps her infant in the shade of her hut for three or four days, receiving visits from admiring neighbors. The infant is protected by various charms and amulets attached to its elbow and wrist. It is fed whenever it cries. When the mother does leave her hut, carrying the infant on her back, she protects it from the sun by covering it with a leaf. When it is bigger she carries it without a supporting sling, either on her hip or on her back. The child is always with her, and she devotes her spare time to playing with it and singing to it. Even when dancing she may carry it in a sling at her side. 846 854 [989] [853] [535]

The child is taught to walk almost as soon as it is big enough to be allowed on the ground alone. This process is sometimes hastened by scratching its knee and placing a fast-moving beetle (*pakalakala*) in the blood, then allowing it to run away. Soon, the mother believes, her child will be running as fast as the beetle. 856 [825]

Breast feeding is continued for about a year; sometimes a child continues to be breast fed while it is able to run about the camp. But from a few weeks after its birth it is introduced gradually to vegetable foods. 853

Fathers, although Schebesta writes that they do not like to be bothered with infants, help their wives in the care of children and even attend to their personal needs. 854 855 593

[P. 178-D]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Mombu FO31
Lese

[ARCHERS]

The southern archers affirm that they always used to burn their corpses. Nowadays the burial takes place beside the hut of the deceased, and the corpse, covered with a cloth, is passed out through an opening made in the side of the hut. It is placed in a hole in the ground, covered with bark and earth. The hut is then pulled down over the tomb, and household utensils are added to the pile. Mourning is profound and sincere among men and women, but ritual dances of mourning, such as those practiced by villager women, are unknown.[2]

In "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri" Schebesta (1948, 543) gives details of a funeral he attended in a southern Lese village, and of an archer funeral, and compares the two. The archer funeral was of an old Mbuti who died after a short attack of smallpox. Schebesta received the news at six o'clock the morning following the death. On reaching the camp he found the corpse laid out in a new cloth, inside the hut. Nearby crouched the widow and eldest daughter. All the womenfolk of the camp were gathered outside the hut, crying and moaning. The eldest son had gone to the village to inform his father's *karé* (p. 179), and within two hours returned with three villagers, wailing. Meanwhile the Pygmies had agreed that the grave should be dug beside the hut. The most promi-

[2] This statement, again, is totally contrary to my experience among both archers and net hunters.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P.184-C]

society is to take place, any raiding of the plantations of village women that is proposed is made known to the villagers in advance, and meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* ceremony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the village, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always) were the musicians and blew into three sonorous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being called "mother" and the others "children." The largest pot contained just enough water to cover the bottom, into which a pipe was thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by holding their noses.[1] In the morning the procession left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. Before they passed through small village hamlets, someone was sent ahead to warn the inhabitants who had not heard the approaching blasts of the long wooden horn; women and children fled to the shelter of their huts as the procession went by. In one village a woman who remained in sight was threatened and made to give a chicken in payment for her release. On nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was hidden in the brush, and the musicians took another path. The main procession entered the camp, where there were only a few old men and their wives.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

Art

There is no evidence of any plastic or graphic art among the archers, other than designs used in body painting, described by Schebesta (1941, 217 ff.), some of which he says are of magical significance and some purely esthetic. In this limited field there is no evidence, either, of specialization. 531 532

As means of artistic expression, music, dance, and drama are evidently of great importance. Schebesta (1941, 243 ff.) describes these art forms and lays particular emphasis on the dance. Other, earlier sources (Schweinfurth, 1874; Burrows, 1898; Geil, 1905; Christy, 1924) frequently mention dance and also the importance of mime among the Mbuti. Of the form and function of music, Schebesta has little to say. He mentions the use of villager instruments, particularly the drum, sanza, and zither, also others such as the musical bow, rattles, flutes (Fig. 15b, c), and pipes, and resonant sticks used by women for beating time to dances. He merely mentions the existence of singing, apart from the dance. 53

Of dance Schebesta (1949, 252–259) gives more detail. He writes (1941, 243): "The principal, if not the daily entertainment of young 535 •

[P.187-D]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 188-B]

[ARCHERS]

535 and old, men and women, is the dance, which is accompanied by music and song." Most of the instruments Schebesta (1941, 244–253) describes serve to accompany dance. He makes three classifications: sportive, mimetic, and erotic dances. The former are not mere exuberant acrobatics, but follow certain choreographic rules; he does not give the rules. The usual form of dance is circular, he says: an outer circle composed of women and an inner circle of men, with the drummer in the center. If there are only a few dancers, the men may dance solos, leaping one by one in toward the drummer, then back to their places in the still-moving circle.

[372] Schebesta also mentions the existence of fire dances, one of which he witnessed on the occasion of a birth in the camp.

535 831 Erotic dances generally involve two lines of dancers, one line male, one female. Each woman comes out of the line in turn and makes an

[P. 188-B]

[ARCHERS]

[P 188-C]

obscene gesture to one of the men, returning to her place as the man follows her and makes a similar gesture. 535 [837]

Mimetic dances usually concern the hunt, says Schebesta.

Drama, chiefly in the form of mime, is sometimes associated with dance and sometimes separate. Schebesta mentions its importance and the ability of the Mbuti in this art, but gives no details. 536

From the material available it is impossible to gauge even the exact nature of these art forms among the Efe archers, let alone their functions in archer society, apart from their obvious recreational role, which seems to have been the only function assigned to them by Schebesta. 53

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Early sources offer only contradiction and confusion concerning the magico-religious system of the Mbuti. A few affirm that the Mbuti are ridden with superstition, but most report that they are without superstition and even without religion. 774

[NET HUNTERS]

Games and pastimes are the same as those for the archers, with the addition of a form of spear practice. A large forest fruit is fixed to the end of a vine which is swung around in a circle. Men standing in a group surrounding the swinger throw their spears as the fruit comes past them, dashing in to retrieve the weapons that miss. 526 [84]

Legend telling, like dance and song, is an important medium of expression as well as recreation. Instrumental music among this group of Mbuti is virtually nil. In a hunting camp a *lukembi* (*sanza*) may be heard, a musical bow, and possibly, though rarely, a notched flute. If the camp is near a village the men may borrow or steal a drum for the dance; otherwise, they use sticks as clappers, either shaved at the end to give a flat sound, or left smooth to give a sharp, hollow sound. The women add to the rhythm with handclaps, and both sexes with stampings of the feet. 538 534 533

There are two kinds of secular dance, erotic and imitative, as described by Schebesta. The third kind of dance described for the archers, [P 212-D] 535 [83] [372] [84]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 213-A]

535 the dance through fire, is reserved for special religious occasions among the net hunters. Secular dancing takes place at any time of the day, any day, but nearly always there is dancing in the evening, and, when the moon gives enough light, the dance may continue through most of the night. Except for the religious dances, men, women, and children take part in the dancing together.

533 Song is even more important to the net hunters. There is not much information in the Putnam material, except that different types of song exist for men and for women and for different occasions, but from my own observations among this group there are, as with dance, clearly two major divisions. One is between secular and sacred, and the other is between songs proper to men and songs proper to women. Certain songs are sung only by members of the men's religious association, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*), and those proper to members of the women's association, the *elima* (Schebesta: *elimo*). Then there are songs for hunting and songs for gathering. Each of these

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claim compensation from him. The women guardians also could make it easy or difficult for the candidates, according to their inclinations. Any man, having fought his way through, had to secure the girl's permission before he slept with her. But reliable Mbuti informants reported that a large number merely fought for the prestige acquired and sought no intercourse with the girls. Outwardly, there is no change, except that instead of firing arrows from their bows the men fire fruit peel, and the fighting is less severe than that described in the tales of olden times. Exactly what happens inside the hut is not known, but the festival is evidently an opportunity for young men to prove their valor, and for young maidens to prove their womanliness, each one attesting to his or her readiness for marriage. There is unfortunately no evidence as to how far the opening of the *elima* constitutes a betrothal, nor how frequently it is followed by marriage.

During the course of the *elima* the girls are under certain food restrictions, which include a prohibition on all meat. *Elima* singing goes on all night. Presumably, as with the *nkumbi* initiation of boys, this is a period of discipline as well as of education. Apart from the special *elima* songs, apparently special dances are

[P. 216-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

taught to the *elima* initiates. In one such dance witnessed by Mrs. Putnam, the girls held arrows and cut one another, and the women struck them with whips.

There is no information from the Putnam material as to any particular ceremony to mark the end of the *elima* (but see Turnbull, 1960a, 198 ff.).

Initiation: *nkumbi*

Putnam's notes on the initiation of boys concern a net-hunting band and are particularly interesting, as they describe an initiation that occurred in the Bira village of Kokonyange in 1935, 14 years before Schebesta witnessed an initiation among the same group. It is significant that Putnam makes no mention of *karé* brotherhood between Pygmy and village boys.

For male initiation among the particular Epulu net hunters we are dealing with, I have only my own field notes,[1] and here again there is no mention of *karé* brotherhood (Turnbull, 1957). The full details of the ceremony do not concern us, as they vary from one village to another. It is important, however, to compare the relationship between the net-hunting Mbuti and the Bira villagers with that between the archers and the Lese, with regard to initiation.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

[EP. 217-C]

comparison with the *nkumbi* as described by Schebesta for the archers.

In the Epulu region the *nkumbi* takes place every three years. It is organized and conducted throughout by the villagers, who invite the Mbuti to take part. The first part of the year, from the dry season onward, is considered most suitable. On this particular occasion there were no village boys of the right age, but the villagers (Bira and Ndaka) went ahead with the arrangements as usual. The fact that only Pygmy boys were to be initiated made no difference to the celebrations, which were conducted in the village with full enthusiasm, bringing villagers from as far as 50 miles away. Villagers allowed themselves to be beaten with long sapling whips (Fig. 46) "to give strength" to the Mbuti candidates.

After a week of preliminary festivities, on the day of the first circumcision, the *makata* sticks (a set of eight or nine resonant sticks tuned to a specific scale) were cut and sounded. The *makata* are heard only during a period of initiation and are destroyed simultaneously with the initiation camp at the end of the festival. Villagers and Pygmies joined in a dance with the *makata*, while others went into the forest a short distance to make a clearing for the initiation camp.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

gifts, such as a few arrows. But it is also subject to settlement between the two villagers involved. This is formally accomplished by having a ceremony in the village according to village custom. [Both Putnam (MS) and Schebesta (1952, 238) mention the possibility of a double ceremony when it is a question of exchanging two brides rather than of effecting a "purchase."] Such ceremonies, belonging to the villager rather than the Mbuti, need not concern us here. It is worth noting, however, that, as with the village ceremony of *nkumbi* initiation, the Mbuti undergo the village marriage ceremony merely as a matter of convenience. They pay no attention to its magical or religious significance, or to the taboos that would fall upon any villagers undergoing the same ceremony (though they may pay lip service to them in the presence of their patron). Further, even during such a villager ceremony, the Mbuti have their own way of consecrating the union, both by introducing a dance with forest leaves, associated with the *elima* (the women's religious association), and by the singing of *elima* songs. In this way the young bride from the distant band is introduced to the association of her female companions-to-be.

It is unlikely that the bride will be a complete stranger to the band, but even if so, she will be immediately befriended and will have willing helpers to make her first few days of

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 224-A]

292
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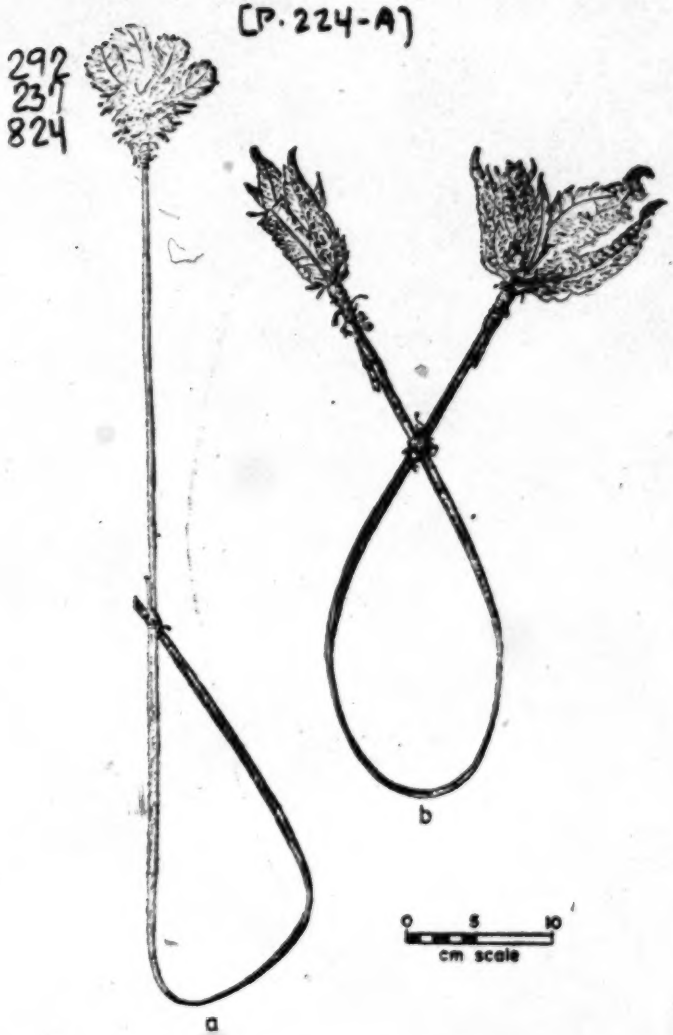
824



[535] FIG. 50. a–b. Headdresses, *salakuku*, net hunters, [575] Epulu District, Central Ituri. Made of vine and [171] feathers, at will, and worn during *molimo* dances. Similar headdresses may occasionally be worn by village women during their *nkumbi* dances.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.224-C]

Unlike the *molimo*, however, the *elima* usually calls for the joint participation of men and women both in song and in dance, which in this context are essentially means of religious expression. This joint participation is in no way connected with that aspect of the *elima* that involves the formal deflowering of the young maiden.

The *molimo*, as practiced by the net hunters, both from the Putnam material and from my own field notes, is strikingly different in manifestation from the description given by Schebesta (1952, 278) of the archers' *toré* association. I mention above the fact that the Putnam material places far more weight on the religious than on the social function of the *molimo*. We have also seen that participation in the *nkumbi* does not necessarily entitle the young Mbuti to take part in the *molimo* proceedings. The *molimo* is essentially an association of adult males; an adult male is a hunter, and one does not become a hunter by being circumcised and learning a number of village songs and dances.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

533 575 796 are not expected to retire to their huts. Only if the singing develops a certain turn do they retreat. They know that certain songs have more significance than others, and, on hearing these, they retire. It is unusual, however, for an ordinary meeting of the men to develop to this extent.

575 533 534 796 Usually the trumpet is heard at about the time the band normally retires for the night. The women in any case have been aware of whatever crisis is the occasion for the meeting and are prepared for it. On hearing the trumpet, they take their children and shut themselves in their huts. None will come out, even to cross the clearing. The men sit close together around one of the fires. As they sing, the *molimo* trumpet echoes their song, sometimes coming close, sometimes going far away into the forest. The *molimo* may come right into the camp itself and install itself, unseen, close to where the men are sitting. At a given point the men may suddenly [535] start dancing through the fire, scattering the ashes and cinders to all sides. Shortly afterwards the participants go to bed. The singing may last only two or three hours, or may con-

[P. 226-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

for the particularly long and intense singing at that time.

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of the *molimo*,[1] the occasion for which was not clear and which took place down near the village. One villager took part. The trumpet and the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared behind one of the huts. As the playing and singing proceeded, the villager and one or two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them against the door of the hut behind which the trumpet was playing. There was much laughter, but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally, the player and trumpet were carried away as they arrived, and everyone went to bed.

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have witnessed were of the more serious kind, following the general disruption in the district among villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam died. At these meetings no drums were used, even though they were sometimes available. But even at such meetings there was generally a period, early in the night, during which the men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene dance around the fire, with much laugh-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

The villagers, says Putnam (1948, 324), regard the Mbuti as a class of beings somewhere between humans and animals. They take Pygmy wives, however, because they are prolific and good to sleep with, and the children of such unions are considered as full human beings and are brought up as such. Further, the villagers think of the Mbuti as barbaric and uncultured, but this attitude does not affect their mutual affection.

There is some evidence that respect for the Mbuti, *in some form, is not lacking among the* villagers. Geluwe (1956) mentions the Bira custom of offering first fruits from the plantations to the Pygmies. Anne Putnam says that the villagers agree with the Pygmies and that the latter have the right to take what food they want from the plantations following the killing of an elephant. Possoz (1954, 2575) suggests that there are linguistic grounds for assuming that the villagers originally referred to the Mbuti by a term denoting respect for them because of their closer connection with the forest spirits.

Putnam mentions trade and the *nkumbi* as two of the major factors, apart from personal relations at an inter-familial level, in maintaining the Mbuti-villager relationship.

Another important factor in interaction is the dance. When the Mbuti stay near the vil-

[P 229-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

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[P.229-C]

lage for any length of time, as when the villager needs help in the cutting of new plantations, then the Pygmy dance is a spectacle eagerly awaited by the villagers.

Finally, Putnam mentions the fact that, when there is a case of poaching by one band within the territory of another, instead of one lineage head or "elder" consulting the other (the process described by Schebesta for the archers), the bands probably just inform the villagers involved and leave it to them to settle.

In disputes between villagers and Mbuti, there is no question of any one Mbuti representing his lineage or band; such of the more important hunters as are available, and usually a number of the younger men and even older boys, come in a body to argue their case together. The villager is always at a slight disadvantage. While the Mbuti can easily move and find another village patron, it is not so easy for a villager to find more Mbuti.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

In so far as the net hunters are much more likely to tell a legend than they are to discuss a question or expound a theory, legends are a valuable source that should be tapped, with the necessary cautions, to give us some insight into Mbuti rationalization as opposed to rationalization among the Mbuti. 538

Art

As among the archers, graphic art is limited to the decoration of the human body (notably the buttocks, legs, and face) and also of bark-cloth. As mentioned above, the juice of the gardenia fruit is used for painting body designs, which Putnam says are for pure esthetic effect and of no magical significance. He believes, however, that some of the facial scarifications may indicate clan membership. No details are given. He adds that sometimes women name their designs; for example, a spotted design may be called "leopard." The design rests in the hands of the artist rather than of the subject. 302 531 [386] [824] [304]

Sometimes even head shaving is performed in such a way as to leave simple designs.

Some carving is now being done (Fig. 49) in imitation of village carvings. 532 197

As with the archers, music and dance are vitally important means of expression to the 533 535

[P. 233-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 234-A]

535 [533] net hunters. They have not only social but also religious meaning. Schebesta's (1941, 252–253) classification of dances as sportive, mimetic, or erotic would also apply to the net hunters, with the addition of religious dances about which we know little. Also, like the archers, the net hunters separate the sexes in dance. There are circular and erotic dances which correspond almost exactly to Schebesta's (1941, 253–256) description of those of the archers.

53 If the band is near a village, they may borrow or steal drums, but the drum, resonant sticks, and handclaps are the only accompaniment (apart from song). A style of dance which uses an orchestra of eight or nine single-pitch bamboo pipes, much in vogue among the villagers, is sometimes copied by other Pygmies in the district. The players stand in a circle. Each player blows his pipe after his opposite number, forming a melodic line. The melodic line and the rhythm are altered by changing both the order of playing and the time lapse. The performers dance as they play and are joined in the dance by others. It is essentially the same style of dance as the *makata* (musical stick) dance seen at the time of *nkumbi*.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

534 Normally, however, and when drums are not available, short resonant sticks are used. These are either smooth, giving a sharp hollow sound, or else they are split and shaved at one end to provide a totally different accompaniment. These sticks, handclaps, and leg stampings provide the rhythmic background to the dance.[1]

• 535 224 825 Mrs. Putnam has seen a dance in which a mask made from a leopard skin was used by the Mbuti. She also describes fully (1954, 296 ff.) a dance performed by them following the killing of a leopard. The body of the leopard is strung up to a branch or a tall stake. All the men, armed with liana whips and whips made from plaited antelope hide, gather around it. The men who are responsible for killing the leopard dance by themselves, approaching the stake. As they do so, they are attacked by the others, and have to fight their way to the leopard's body and cut it down, at which everyone gives a shout of triumph. In the

[1] It is most notable that for religious song and dance such is the only form of accompaniment, even if drums are available.

[P. 234-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 234-C]

dance observed by Mrs. Putnam the man who first speared the leopard was wounded but nonetheless took part in the dance. The other two men involved in the killing protected him as much as they could from their attackers and guarded him as he cut the leopard down. Onlookers said that he would not have been thought a coward if he had not taken part, because of his wounds, but he had chosen to do so. 535 • 224 825

Song, used in conjunction with dance, as described by Schebesta, also has a separate function and operates as an art form in its own right. This, at first, Schebesta (1933, 301) denied, but later (1936b, 27; 1948, 259) he conceded the greater importance of song over dance. Among the net hunters there is a very clear division of song into four main categories, each of which can be distinguished by style and technique alone, and a fifth subsidiary category of play songs. The main categories are, as briefly mentioned above (p. 213), religious songs and secular songs, each subdivided according to sex, i.e., songs of the men's 533

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 238-C]

the water animal is the cause of all death or whether it causes only unexplained deaths. It seems that it may not be connected with "normal" deaths—deaths that do not, in fact, cause any particular crisis as far as the community as a whole is concerned.

According to Mrs. Putnam's notes,[1] the water animal that is the rainbow is also the *molimo*. She asked a direct question as to whether this was so or not and was given an affirmative answer by one of her most reliable informants. She says that his manner seemed to indicate further that she had asked the right question. According to the same informant the *molimo* comes out the day following the death of some important person, regardless of whether the death was by natural or other means. The informant also referred to a dance in which the men "chased" the *molimo*, but this evidently was not one of the serious *molimo* dances as it was not fatal for women to see it. It seems certain that the water animal and the rainbow are

[535]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 247-c]

296 ff.), following the killing of a leopard. The dead leopard is tied to a stake, which is surrounded by the men, armed with liana whips and plaited hide thongs. The hunters involved in the killing of the leopard perform a dance, in the course of which they have to fight their way through to the stake and cut down the carcass of the leopard they have already killed once. In the instance cited the most prominent of the three chief actors had been wounded by the leopard but insisted on taking part though his fellows said that none would call him a coward if he did not. The other two men protected him from the attackers and guarded him as he swung his spear and cut the leopard down. The cutting down is acclaimed by all with a shout of satisfaction. Unfortunately the information does not carry essential details such as which of the men or how many of the band held the leopard as their totem, or as to what relationship, kinship or otherwise, existed between participants in the dance. Possibly the ceremony is propitiatory, but from the information on totemism among these particular Mbuti it seems unlikely. It rather appears as a formal opposition between the human and the animal worlds.

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825
[535]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

In so far as individual magic is concerned, it seems that its practice among the Mbuti, when taken over from the villager, is of no more significance than our own superstitious crossing of the fingers, touching of wood, or avoidance of walking under ladders. When Pygmies call in villager specialists to perform magic for them, mainly to improve hunting, we have at least to consider the possibility of a mere political maneuver.

Dance and Festivity

Villagers and Pygmies associate frequently at festive seasons or occasions. Pygmies will attend any village festival, and when they have an occasion of their own (such as the killing of an elephant) they first celebrate in their forest camp, then break camp and continue their celebrations in the village.

Dance is an important feature of any celebration, villager or Pygmy, but in this the two never mix. They watch each other's dances with enjoyment, but take part only in fun. One ex-

[P. 250-D]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 261-A]

ception is the ritual *makata* dance which is held only during the *nkumbi*.

Even in ordinary times, when a hunting band is visiting a village, it may come down to the main meeting place in the evening and dance. The villagers expect it and regard it as one of their forms of entertainment, though they say they consider the Pygmy dance barbaric. The Pygmy definitely fills the role of entertainer and *is not in*frequently called on by the villagers to dance.

When the two groups meet on both festive and ordinary occasions they keep apart from each other. There is no leisure activity in which they participate together, only a few ritual activities (which are discussed below). The Mbuti camp beside the village, on the edge of the plantation where the forest begins. This physical disposition of the two communities, which seems to be invariable throughout the Ituri, and general Pygmy behavior in the village may well symbolize the contiguous nature of the relationship between the two peoples, as opposed to any close symbiosis such as was alleged by Schebesta.

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PLATE 38 7/1

GIRLS' HOOP DANCE, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Dance, together with song, forms the major outlet of artistic expression for the Mbuti. The line between sacred and secular is almost non-existent. The hoop dance is used by girls and women to celebrate the *elima*, or puberty, of one of their number, but it may be seen also as an idle moment in almost any day. Words of accompanying songs are nearly invariably in praise of the forest.

1, /Plate 38 appears on page 309--Analyst/
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[P.308]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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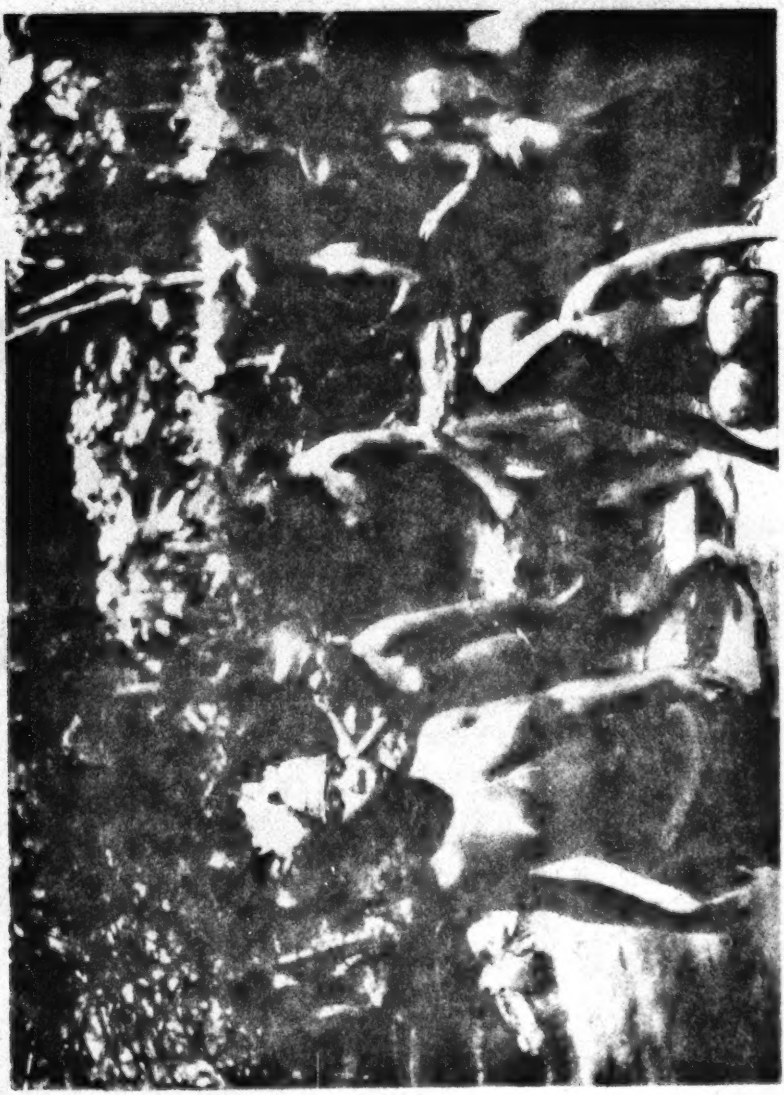

/Plate 38/

[P309] /Caption appears on p.308/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
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oughly as possible, it seems that among both Bira and Ndaka, and I believe also among the Lesé, death is believed to put fellow clansmen of the deceased in great danger from the *keti*, or evil spirits. The object of the *molimo* is twofold, then; it must help the deceased on his way, giving him what protection it can, and it must protect the living, who will be in a state of ritual danger throughout the period of mourning.

During that period the *molimo* meets regularly, at nighttime, in the house of the senior surviving member of the clan, in whose possession the *tete* is held. Only adult male clansmen are admitted, and the sound of the *tete* is the audible evidence of the invisible presence of their totemic guardian spirit. Specially prepared food is offered to the spirit, and the rest is eaten by the men. No women are allowed to participate in any way, even by cooking the food, according to all informants. However, I had been told the same thing about the Mbuti and found it to be different, and do not accept this information without some reservation. It would seem, though, that women generally are excluded from the *molimo* of the villagers, and indeed it really is no concern of theirs.

During the proceedings, which may last an hour or so, the men wail and call out the name and/or the kinship term of address of the deceased; his praises are recited and he is commended to the ancestral spirits. At the same time, the praises of the surviving clan members are similarly recited, and mention is made of the way in which they have upheld tribal lore and observed all the rules of clan exogamy, and have increased the number of attendant Mbuti. Continued protection for the living is requested, particularly for the period of mourning. Apparently no Mbuti take part in this part of the ceremony, though there seemed to be some disagreement over this and my impression was that the associated Mbuti are not prohibited from attending, but effectively seldom, if ever, do.

Upon the death of an Mbuti the *kpara* will not only oversee the burial and funerary ceremonies and divination, he will also want to hear announced the calling together of the men of the *molimo*. Sometimes he will leave it at that, but if the Mbuti continue to stay in the village and hold any *molimo* meetings in their village camp, the *kpara* may attend one or two meetings. It is very noticeable that when he does, the meeting runs a completely different course, centering around some erotic dancing by the younger men and a small amount of singing. The *molimo* trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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The molimo trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of the villager *fete*, may be heard growling in a noncommittal manner, as if uncertain which clan totem to imitate from the diversity of clans undoubtedly represented at the Mbuti *molimo* fire. It seems that the most common sound for the instrument to make under such circumstances is the growl of a leopard, which safely covers all clans, Mbuti and villager.

However, the villagers are not made welcome, and if it were any but the *kpara* or his representative the *molimo* would be abandoned the moment a villager approached. As it is, on the few occasions when I have seen a *kpara* attend, he was not offered any food or any other inducement to stay, the *molimo* trumpet remained out of sight the whole time and only growled indistinctly once or twice; the singing was sporadic and only the young men were active, dancing around the fire.

The Mbuti said that the villagers were afraid and would not in any case be likely to come near; the *kpara* only did it because he felt obliged to. In all cases of which I have any experience, except two instances where a brief *molimo* was held in a village camp for an Mbuti child who died there, the Mbuti *molimo* is held at nighttime in the forest, where interference from the village would be unthinkable. As with the *elima*, however, the closing stages are often held in the village, this being meant to coincide with the end of the official period of mourning and therefore the signal for a feast to be supplied by the villagers.

It does seem significant, nonetheless, that the Mbuti should sing any *molimo* songs in the village camp, for normally they refuse to sing any of their true forest songs when in the village. However, they are sung infrequently, with marked restraint, and widely separated by long snatches of songs that I never heard in the forest or, unfortunately, in the villages. The latter bore a distinct resemblance to certain songs taught during the *nkumbi*, and some were undoubtedly variants on *nkumbi* songs. The only information I could get was they were not "songs of the forest" but were "songs of the village." The villagers confirmed that they heard the Mbuti sometimes singing village *molimo* songs, and surprise was expressed that they would sing anything else, for everything else was *bulé*, empty.

The connection between the *molimo*, as performed by the Mbuti in the village, and the *nkumbi* was made all the more evident when on one *molimo* occasion the two members of the *kpara's* family stood up and performed a dance only seen otherwise in the initiation camp.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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On another occasion the *kpara* himself did exactly the same thing. In the first instance the *kpara* was Ndaka, in the second, Bira. The villagers evidently believe that whatever *molimo* ritual the Mbuti have, it was learned from the village, if badly learned and performed with illegitimate variations. As with the *elima*, perhaps also for fear of exposure to the malevolent forest spirits, the villagers do not seek to interfere too much with Mbuti *molimo* celebrations. We shall see that these celebrations are quite divorced from the village *molimo*, regardless of whether or not the origin of the two was common. Also, we shall see that the Mbuti *molimo* has none of the connections that evidently exist between the village *molimo* and the *nkumbi*.

As with the *elima*, the villagers limit the extent of their interest to ensuring the removal, by village-supplied procedure, of the last taints of uncleanliness. This they do, again in conjunction with a feast, turning a blind eye to the fact that as many as a dozen different Mbuti "clans" may be represented at what is supposed to be a closed clan feast.

The extent to which the villagers believe they assert supernatural control over the Mbuti does not coincide at all with the extent to which they effectively do exert such control, for the reason that must now be sufficiently obvious; no matter how many or what manner of village institutions the Mbuti adopt, they are adopted into a pre-existing system and no longer have the same interrelationships they do in the village system. The two systems are kept irreconcilably apart by what has in effect been emerging throughout—the existence of two completely different sets of values.

Yet the villagers are not entirely victims of their own *mbafu*, as the Mbuti would have it. There is little else they could do, and the adoption of the Mbuti into one aspect of village social structure would indeed be *bulé* without their adoption into the total structure. The villagers are consistent and logical, and above all it must be remembered that in their own eyes they have achieved what they set out to achieve—control. They believe that ultimate control is theirs because of the force of the supernatural powers on their side, and in point of fact, although it does not work quite the way they think, the concept of supernatural power does give them a small measure of control to the extent that it creates fear.

But what is also achieved is the creation of a myth that completely regularizes the whole situation, as far as the villagers are concerned, affording them an institutionalized means of dealing with every possi-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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CHAPTER 7

Flux and Instability

Not yet having examined the forest context, we cannot completely dispose of the question of economic dependence or interdependence. At the moment, it appears that the Mbuti do not need the villagers except for luxuries which may in time become necessities, and it equally seems that the villagers do not need the Mbuti except as laborers on the plantations, in particular with the cotton harvest, and this is a very recent need introduced by Belgian administration. The most that one can say about the economic aspect of the relationship is that it appears to be one of mutual convenience. The villagers *could* hunt (and in areas where there are few or no Mbuti, they do) but they prefer not to go into the forest if it can be avoided. The Mbuti *could* live successfully off the forest at their indigenous level of technology, but trade with the villagers makes life that much easier.

If we look carefully at daily life in any village, the economic aspect of the relationship fades even further into the background. Mbuti can occasionally be seen bringing in from the forest meat or other forest products needed by the villagers, such as the *fito* saplings and phrynium leaves for their houses. More often they will be seen helping with odd domestic chores, such as fetching water or firewood, house-building, or guarding plantations. Mbuti women help the village women pound manioc and to thresh and winnow the locally grown dry rice. They also help the village women carry loads of plantains to and from the market.

But mostly, if any Mbuti are to be seen at all, they will be seen lazing on the *baraza* of their *kpara*, being fed and offered ends of cigarettes, or bribed with liquor to put on a dance that all the villagers will come to watch. Such dances are wild and erotic, accompanied by anything from one to three or four drums, never by song.

It is also possible to see Mbuti scrounging food from villagers

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
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12. Mbuti women may take part in a hoop dance while in the village, but traditional forest songs and dances are forbidden outside the forest. Note the body decoration on the leg of the woman to the rear; the dye is obtained from the gardenia fruit.

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13. A village wedding is arranged for the Mbuti hunter Makubasi. Here his bride, flanked by two sisters, stands in the middle of the village on banana-leaf cushions, fanned by her *kpara*'s sister. By arranging such marriages, the villagers hope to maintain some control over the Mbuti they believe they "inherit."

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Youths also have considerable say in the settling of any dispute concerning betrothal, though ultimately it is the *mangesé* who decide such matters. The hunters control all activities concerning the hunt and the movement of camp. The *mangesé* act as general arbiters and are effectively a court of final appeal, their age entitling them to unquestioning respect. Particularly in matters concerning betrothal are the *mangesé* consulted, for their genealogical memory can be stretched to suit the occasion. And in the *molimo* festival, as in the *elima*, they share the honors with the youths: the hunters have to do most of the work, supplying the food and cooking it for the nightly or daily feasting, but the singing and dancing, which are central to the festivals, are led by the *mangesé* and the youths.

In matters concerning relationship with other bands, the band as a whole, rather than any age group or association of age groups, decides the issue. On such occasions even children will sit by and take part.

We have already mentioned some of the religious functions of the age groups, in association with their political functions, and it will be seen that the two are closely interconnected. It might just be pointed out here that in a *molimo* festival held for the death of an Mbuti, age-group and band membership take precedence over family membership. The youths will lead the dancing, and the leading youth will lead because he is the best dancer, not because he is related to the dead person. Similarly with the singing led by the *mangesé*. The *molimo* horn may be supplied by anyone. The person who sings into it is generally a youth, though sometimes a young hunter, again regardless of kinship but on account of his renown and ability as a singer.

Considering the very clear roles of the age groups, and their comprehensive nature, it is plain that any unilineal system of descent would be highly disruptive. The loose laws of marriage and adoption, which are permissive rather than prescriptive, preferential or prohibitive, and the nonlineal nature of band composition allow for the flexibility that is obviously necessary to maintain the proper balance of recruitment into each age group.

Although a bilateral recognition of descent does exist and is sometimes utilized to provide the necessary balance of power, it can still hardly be dignified by the term "lineage system." Owing to the nonlineal, territorial nature of band composition, and the frequency of sister exchange, nuclear families may divide or remain united, regardless of lineage, depending upon the context.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

of youths, will be left in charge of the camp and of any children that elect to stay behind. Any child old enough to make the decision does so himself. If his parents do not want to be bothered with him he has a wide range of classificatory mothers and fathers to call on, or if he is old enough he will simply join his own age group and set off with them. Girls always go with the women; boys go with their fathers, youths may go with their fathers or on their own. If a father has a particularly long net he may welcome an extra spear or bow and arrow nearby, and his adolescent sons serve in this capacity.

The hunt is described more fully in Chapter Ten. Here it is only necessary to point out that among the net-hunters, where a net is owned by married men or by extremely rare, gifted bachelor hunters (youths), the hunt effectively divides itself into nuclear family groups but not into nuclear families, for each family, during the hunt, is itself divided by age and sex. The family-owned nets stretch out in a long semicircle, end to end, and the women act as beaters, forming a corresponding semicircle opposite. But each net is utterly dependent on the others, as is each beater, and it is the co-operative aspect of the age group that is emphasized, rather than the distinctness of each family. The division of spoils similarly stresses band rather than family values, and the hunting songs and dances that take place after, and sometimes before, the hunt further illustrate that the hunt is considered an affair of the band as a whole.

When the hunt returns to camp there is immediate excitement as those who stayed behind crowd around for tales of all that happened, and maybe for a few tidbits of raw meat. In the confusion, men and women alike, but particularly women, may be seen furtively concealing some of their spoils under the leaves of their roofs, or in empty pots nearby. For although there will have been some sharing on the scene, there is always more back in the camp, and family loyalty is not that subject to band loyalty that there is no cheating.

The food is prepared and cooked right away, and while this is being done a hunting dance may take place, in which men and women and children all take part. This dance is frequently imitative of hunting activities, with older people taking the part of the animals hunted. Any unusual event of the day's hunt may be reenacted, and this is also an occasion where the sanction of ridicule may be applied to any hunter, male or female, who is considered to have been unsatisfactory. It is not uncommon for a husband to lead a dance ridiculing a wife who, through her laziness as a beater, spoiled his chances.

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Mbuti

Women are equally quick to ridicule the menfolk when there is justification.

This is also a time favored by youths for slipping off into the forest with their girl friends for some not very quiet lovemaking. Although lovemaking is not performed openly, no great attempt is made to conceal it. The general feeling is that if surprised in the act, one simply says hello (*karibu*) politely and expects the intruder to continue on his way. Fathers, and mothers too, refer to the nuisance of a flirtatious son or daughter whom they might surprise in this way. The parent pretends to see nothing in such a case, and the youths claim, with more bravado than truth perhaps, not to be unduly disturbed unless they are making love to a relative.

Lovemaking generally takes place in the forest, though there is no fixed rule. It is thought somewhat exciting to make love in a hut, but not very healthy. There are preferences that individuals have for making love near a stream, or in a splash of sunlight, or in the dark depths of the forest. It is evidently a purely aesthetic consideration, and I have heard a number of youths who stated that the best time was while hunting. But moonlight evidently attracts a great number, and I have met several who talk, with great poetry, of the joys of masturbation when alone in the moonlight. On three rare occasions I have seen different individuals dancing, by themselves, in the moonlight and in the forest, away from the camp. The intimacy between the individual and the forest—one might almost say the act of making love to the forest—was expressed by one Mbuti who said, when I questioned him as to why he was dancing alone, that he was dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon. He then continued his dance with the utmost unconcern.

Not all lovemaking is quite so romantic, however, and when boys and girls are following a trail together, the procession may degenerate into a good-humored but undeniably lusty orgy. A boy may rip off a girl's outer bark cloth, if he can catch her, but he may never have intercourse with her without her permission. I know of no cases of rape, though boys often talk about their intentions of forcing reluctant maidens to their will.

There are no formal bachelor huts, but many camps have informal variants. They are sometimes built for an older youth by his mother, or they may be taken over by adolescent boys or girls when the occupant leaves for some reason. In such huts, and even out in the open, around the campfire, it is usual to see not only youths but also

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

838 married men sleeping together. The two age groups do not mix, but
513 among themselves members of the same sex think nothing of sleeping close to each other and deriving mild sexual satisfaction from the physical contact. They state very carefully rules as to how to lie, with legs thrown backwards around the other's legs, or even around his hips or waist, and they say one may entwine legs while lying front to front, though it is not considered good to hold each other too closely with the arms. The thought of any sexual intercourse taking place,
[578] however, is greeted with apparent horror, and homosexuality is never alluded to except as a great insult, under the most dire provocation. There is, however, a dance in which the sexes are effectively reversed, and which is danced with the utmost humor, but the role of which
[535] I could never exactly determine. The dance, *ekokomea*, is dealt with later in the context in which it occurs; namely, at the time of the *molimo* festival.

837 If a considerable amount of sexual liberty is allowed the youths, a
834 fair amount is at least said to be taken by the younger married hunters. I have not, however, been able to record a single instance of a marital dispute involving the band that arose out of infidelity on either side. There are few restrictions on sexual intercourse, though the villagers state many on behalf of the Mbuti. The married hunters, as do the youths, regard the hunt as an opportune time for ac-
841 tivity of this kind. At menstruation, which is a time when a village
[842] woman is under the strictest ritual prohibitions, the Mbuti attitude is that it all depends on whether or not you want children, as this is when conception is most likely to take place. There are those who enjoy sex at this time, and those who find it distasteful. The only restriction is that a wife should inform her husband, or a girl her boy friend, that she is "with blood" so that he will know.

846 Immediately following childbirth is a rather vague period, some-
837 times stated as days, sometimes more grandiosely as years, when intercourse is forbidden. Unfortunately I was able to follow up only on three instances of childbirth, but in each of these the Mbuti fathers did exactly what they said they would do; two of them refrained from intercourse with their wives for about a year, during which time they flirted with as many girls as they liked, and did not deny open gossip
846 that they were "sleeping around." This is the generally accepted pat-
853 tern, the reason being given that a woman can only feed one child at a time, so she must not become pregnant again until her last child is weaned. This may be from one to three years. If during that time

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

though he expected as much. Rather more serious is a medicine called, in the Epulu district, *anjo*. It is a paste made from the heart, brain and eyes, sometimes from other parts as well, of some highly prized game. The paste is charred and placed inside the horn of that animal, which is then inverted and stuck in the ground, usually near the family hearth. The paste is put on the body, most often the forehead, of the hunter and of members of his family. Sometimes it is even offered to privileged friends. It is believed to convey to the hunter the senses of the animal so that he will be able to deceive the animal as well as foresee his movements. However, the use of this individual magic is considered antisocial in many bands, particularly if it appears to be attended by success at the cost of others in the band. It may cause disputes, and then generally all such medicine is collected and burned.

By far the most significant magico-religious acts connected with the hunt are more of the order of religion than of magic. One is the hunting song (with or without dance), and the other is the hunting fire. The song or the dance may precede or follow a hunt. It is distinct from any other form of song or dance. The song form is rather complex and demands co-operation in a manner comparable to that demanded in the hunt itself. The dance is suggestively imitative of a successful hunt, but is by no means mere mime. Like the song form, the choreography is quite distinct, and is not used in any other context.

The hunting fire in the southern part of the net-hunting area takes the form of a fire lit near the trail just before the hunt sets out in the morning. It is generally lit by youths, always at the base of a young tree. When blazing it is covered with leaves, so the heavy smoke is given off. Men and women, as they pass by the fire on their way to the hunt, may stop to gossip, or they may pay no attention. I have not seen or heard of any accompanying ritual or invocation, the only explanation ever stated being that the fire is to rejoice the forest, and it would seem to have the same primary purpose as song and dance, that of attracting the attention of the forest. It is certainly believed that the fire will insure the protection of the Mbuti and help toward success in the hunt.

Further north, another form of hunting fire is used, associated with rather more ritual. There the net-hunters build the fire within the camp, whereas in the south it is always just outside. The fire is sur-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same distinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the use of special wooden clappers called *ngbengbe* by the net-hunters of the Epulu region, *epopo* or *koko* by the archers further east.

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for the *apuma* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in boles in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always collected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hollow tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare *sundu*, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the ground, and any who are timid or slow get whisked back into the air again as the sapling rebounds, and are much laughed at for their failure.

The tug-of-war separates the sexes, and although it is primarily an adult game, youths and children sometimes join in. However, it is likely to become rough, and youngsters are not encouraged. A man may, and sometimes does, pull on the side of the women, to make a better match, but he may also go to their side as if to help and then start pulling in the opposite direction. It is then up to the women to decide whether they are better off continuing to pull, or whether it is worth their while for two or three of them to attack the man. They themselves will sometimes leave their side and go to the men's side and simply try and pull them away from the vine rope. No restrictions were evident, and each contest continued until the complete collapse of one side or the other. If anything, among the Epulu net-hunters the women seemed to win more frequently. An immense amount of energy was dissipated in this way, yet one tug-of-war would follow another for sometimes as long as an hour.

The division of sexes visible in this contest, and the same implied symbolic conflict, was also visible in the *ekokomea* dance which I saw among the Epulu net-hunters during two honey seasons; but I have also seen the dance in the same band during the course of a *molimo* festival. I found it to be known among all other bands I visited, though I never actually saw it practiced among the archers. With these other bands it is said to be danced on occasions of great importance to the band, such occasions not being specified.

Ekokomea involves a reversal of the sexes, and everyone from the oldest to the youngest may take part. Usually the children follow the youths and adults and imitate the dance on their own. Women put heavy objects in the bark cloth between their legs and stride along in a way that emphasizes the swinging motion of their "genitalia." The men indicate their assumed female sex by performing divers actions typical only of women, often pretending to clean their private parts as women do. Both men and women, but mainly men, may take a leaf or a small strip of bark cloth or skin, make a slit in it, and proudly display it, occasionally putting a finger through the slit so as to leave the symbolism in no doubt.

The dance begins spontaneously, without preparation, with two or three individuals assuming the reversed roles and marching in line from hut to hut, singing, "*Ekokomes.*" No satisfactory translation

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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of the word was ever given to me; it simply refers to an elbow, a chicken or a fallen tree, according to pronunciation. It is pronounced all ways, and all forms of translation are given, stories being invented ad lib to explain the dance.

As people come out of their huts or leave their hearths to join in the line, the movements get more and more suggestive and rhythmic, and when the line is complete couples will break away and dance into the center and there imitate the act of copulation according to their reversed roles, while the others dance around, singing and laughing loudly. Each couple tries to outdo the others in exaggeration and suggestiveness, and just about every conceivable abnormal situation is imitated, dogs, chickens, children, even infants being dragged into the act if they are within reach.

The end of the dance is the usual near-hysterical laughter that is brought on by any form of exaggerated mime or storytelling, with the dancers rolling on the ground and clapping their hands to show their amusement. As soon as this has subsided the dance is likely to start all over again for a second or even a third time.

Ekokomea, however, is by no means danced every day, even during the honey season; more than once or twice a week would be rather frequent. It is similar during the *molimo*. So throughout the year the dance is not likely to take place in any one band more than a dozen times. This is one dance that I have seen danced both in the forest and in the village. It is never danced by the villagers, who regard it as a sign of Mbuti depravity, but who nonetheless watch it with the greatest pleasure. The older Mbuti say it would not be danced in the village, but even to them either its exact significance is not clear or else it is something they were unwilling to discuss.

Much more directly connected with the honey season is a mimetic dance in which the men enact the honey gatherers, the women the bees. The men form a line and dance around the camp as though going through the forest looking and listening for bees. Parallel to them, and sometimes on the verge of the camp or even in the forest, is a line of women. The men sing a honey song, the women buzz like bees. When the men pretend they find the honey and are about to take it, the women descend on them and beat the burning embers they carry above the men's heads so that the sparks fall on them—stinging them like bees, they say. This is often followed by a good-natured fight which may develop either into the tug-of-war or *ekokomea*.

Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which

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Mbuti

gone there would have been enough beaters. As usual the women were loud in their complaint, and two of the hunters who had stayed behind with their nets now joined the side of Pepei and said that they had not gone because the women made so much noise, all the game was scared away and the hunt would have been empty anyway. Even Cephu had meat (a highly dramatic statement, for Cephu was usually meatless, or considered so), and the neighboring Lesé pygmies had meat, and everyone knew what poor hunters they were. But we were all starving because everyone was lazy.

The discussion went on for about an hour, it being made an excuse to raise all manner of minor sources of discontent. The hunt did not go off again, but in the afternoon there was a big hunting dance, and the next day the women made a special show of setting out, carrying their husbands' nets and spears, at least until they were out of the camp.

9. While many of the disputes concerning food arise out of general shortage or dissatisfaction, usually owing to poor hunting, and are made occasion for bringing up almost any topic, they are more often made occasion for criticizing specific groups. Thus children will find themselves criticized for making too much noise in their playground, or for splashing too loudly in the stream and so frightening the game away. Youths are accused of idling and playing with girls on the fringes of the hunt instead of guarding the edges against escaping game. Women are blamed for being lazy or inefficient as beaters, men for relying too much on women "who have other work to do." Elders are blamed for not keeping the camp quiet while the hunt is away, and always the whole camp is blamed for causing poor hunting by not singing and dancing properly.

There are innumerable petty squabbles over division of food, but these are always settled by those concerned. Never once have I seen such a squabble become an affair for the whole band to discuss. The only cases of disputes concerning food that have centered around specific individuals, and have not been mere expressions of marital disharmony, have concerned hunting "crimes." These are few and far between, and rather than accuse someone of being a poor hunter it is more often just pointed out that his net is always empty. There was one occasion, however, on which Cephu set his net up inside the hunting circle, therefore in a better position to catch the game being driven in by the beaters. A full description of this is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961, Chapter 5). Its essentials are as follows:

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11. Sau was the mother of Amabosu, who had exchanged sisters with Ekianga. Sau was regarded by the villagers as a dangerous witch, a role she filled with zeal and which the Mbuti found useful in two ways. It provided them with a scapegoat in the forest just as it was a handy excuse for any misadventure in the village. In either situation the latent dramatic possibilities appealed enormously to the old lady's histrionic susceptibilities. One day Sau asked the wife of Mbaaka, a nephew of Njobo, for some food. She was refused. That night she did a little dance in front of Mbaaka's hut, her usual way of showing her displeasure. The next day, on the hunt, Masisi's son was about to run in bare-handed to catch a sharp-toothed *sindula* (chevrotain), but Amabosu persuaded him to take his spear. He did so, and then collided with Mbaaka, spearing him in the side.

There was actually some bad feeling between Amabosu and Mbaaka, and in case this was brought up (making it seem that Amabosu had deliberately caused his injury) the discussion of the incident was quickly turned to the refusal of Mbaaka's wife to give Sau food. She thus became the prime target for blame, with Sau acting as a secondary scapegoat, being criticized for dancing her "bad dance" outside Mbaaka's hut. In case anyone should take it too seriously, Manyalibo promptly started making fun of Sau's dance, flapping his hands to imitate Sau's pendent breasts. This was taken up by the children, who would not be content until Sau herself gave a demonstration.

That evening several hunters stood in midcamp[6] and said what a good camp it was, and commented on the good hunting. No further word was said about the spearing, except in the village, where the respective *kpara* went to the tribunal to effect reconciliation (between themselves) and blood payment. Amabosu's *kpara* agreed to pay sixty francs to Mbaaka's *kpara*, Masisi's *kpara* paying only forty. This news caused great hilarity in the camp, and the comment that villagers were animals, always "eating" each other. Between the Mbuti themselves I could find no evidence of blood payment of any kind, though any incident involving the drawing of blood is bound to provoke discus-

failure to share in time of need is considered a far greater crime than is petty (i.e., individual) theft.

[6] The importance of the "midcamp" position is that it defines the viewpoint of the person talking. An individual talking from his own hearth talks as an individual. If he talks from midcamp he is taking a band rather than an individual point of view. Similarly the *kumamolimo* is central, but more restricted in area and viewpoint, being used as a vantage point to discuss with the whole band matters pertaining to the *molimo*.

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25. Akidinimba celebrates her puberty and her forthcoming marriage during an elima dance.

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26. A young Mbuti mother, Epini, with her infant wrapped in a specially chosen piece of bark cloth. She will freely allow other women to fondle and even nurse her child, and will pass it around for the men to hold and admire.

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of honeycomb pressed down above it. Two sticks are prepared in this way by a hunter, and when the cloth is set on fire the hunter waves them both in the air. He then hands each of them to a youth, and the two youths run through the camp and out into the forest around the camp. The womenfolk clap loudly until the youths return and rather unceremoniously put the sticks down near the central fire.

The honey dance also separates the sexes, the women pretending to be bees, men the honey gatherers. Yet another separation, symbolizing the power of the women, is the medicine that is said to attune one's hearing so that one can hear the larvae wriggling in the honeycombs, high up in the trees. A woman prepares a stick which, when blown through, produces a misty spray. She blows into the ears of all the men. The men say that the bubbling noise they hear is the sound of larvae and grubs eating honey, and that it will guide them to the hives.

There is seldom any doubt as to where honey lies, and it is plainly the social rather than the economic importance of the honey season that is being celebrated. This is most clear in the great *angbe* medicine, in which the age groups are further differentiated and which includes attention to orientation that is quite unique in my experience (this, together with several other features, is so singular that it cannot be adequately explained at the moment, but is nonetheless described for its intrinsic interest).

At the *kuma'ngbe* (hearth of honey), a number of youths chop a special *tembu* wood into kindling (the only time I have ever seen kindling prepared). Four hunters supervise. The four hunters then put their honey axes down in the hearth, blades to the center. One of the hunters lines the axes up so they align with the cardinal points of the compass. This done, each hunter takes his ax and draws it toward him, cutting a trench along that line. In this way four trenches, two feet long and three inches wide and deep, are cut. In the center a square is cut so that the four corners indicate the intermediate compass points. The position of the sun is consulted to insure correct alignment.

A senior hunter has meanwhile cut four lengths of *teka* vine, carefully bound so that its juices do not escape. He removes the binding and allows the juice to fill the center square, after which water is added to fill the trenches. The combination of juice and water is said to be *mota*, or powerful. Each vine is laid in a trench, projecting at the extremities. Two youths then take out the vines and shake them

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PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

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but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

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(*ndura nde bokbu*), and if pressed begin to enumerate the totality of their experience. Primarily, however, they refer to the forest as mother or father, according to context. On the hunt the men address it as father, the women as mother. A man receiving a sudden unexpected favor, as he sees it (coming across a cache of highly prized mushrooms), is apt to address the forest as mother. A woman who is having a hard time finding the leaves or saplings she wants will, getting into a tangle of undergrowth, almost certainly start addressing the forest as father and accuse it of being far too severe and strict. The terms are so widely and frequently used that I have no means of saying which is the more prevalent. If anything, I would hazard a guess that "mother" is used more often than "father." The Mbuti themselves say that which term they use and when is a matter for their *roho*.

The extent to which the Mbuti personify the forest is seen when in explanation they say that the forest gives them not only food and shelter, warmth and clothing, but also affection (*ndura pisasu bendu, pisasu isa, pisasu ngombe; ndura ekondisu*). The intimacy of the relationship between the individual Mbuti and his forest godhead is most plainly seen in the incident described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 15), where a youth was found dancing all by himself in the moonlight, singing a wordless song as he danced. When questioned as to why he was dancing alone, he answered, "I am not dancing alone, I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon."[3]

3 *Kanga me bi akilé: me bi na ndura, me bi na songé.*

Schebesta (1952, 303) refers to *songé* (moon) as being one of the net-hunting names for God, regarded as the creator of all things (1952, 305), particularly of man, which *songé* creates by means of menstrual blood. He does not, unfortunately, give more information or documentation on this interpretation, but there is no doubt that the moon is, to the Mbuti, an object of interest and (as seen above) affection, and at the same time in common discussion they do connect the moon with menstruation, and menstruation with fertility. I have myself not come across any instance of the moon being worshipped as such, unless this moonlight dance be regarded as worship, except in one song of the *molimo*, the words of which were:

Ema songé, ema, ema; okisu ema; pika'i.
Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

This is remarkably similar to a translation given by Bowra (1962, 70) of a song of the Gabon pygmies cited by Trilles (1945, 157).

Moon, O mother moon, O mother moon,
mother of living things,
Hear our voice, O mother moon!
O, mother moon, O mother moon,
Keep away the spirits of the dead,
Hear our voice, O mother moon,
O mother moon, O mother moon.

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This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight, or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence, is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion. For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted, but its affection.

THE POWER OF SOUND

Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song. The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed; noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinana'e;*

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THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry 752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many 757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the [224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If [75] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or 778 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire 796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest 533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the [782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not [533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*, [535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and [765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and b[illegible]casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of t[illegible] *molimo* trumpet.

[626] All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

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tled, how good the weather is, and whether or not visiting relatives or friends are expected. Within a few days, however, the festival will begin, and from the moment of its inception its stated concern is to awaken and, even more important, to rejoice the forest. The lesser *molimo* is more often spoken of as "awakening" the forest (*su kongi ndura*), though that too has to be done in a way that will rejoice it. The greater *molimo* should ideally be a festival of sheer joy. The course of the festival becomes more and more a symbolic triumph of life over death, the death of the individual being recognized in the final dramatic stamping out of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life. This is not done, however, until time and time again the fire has been attacked in an effort to destroy it, but has been regenerated by the dances of the men, who in a dance that imitates the act of copulation, with the fire as their partner, fan the scattered fire back into a blaze of life.

It is normally the old woman, who is an integral part of every greater *molimo*, who either by herself or with a girl attacks the fire, dancing through it and scattering it all around. Thus the woman who gives birth to life also seeks to destroy it. She is referred to by no title other than "mother," the same term of address used for the forest in its capacity as giver of life and death. It is primarily the young men who hastily rebuild the fire and fan it back into a blaze with their dance of life. It is frequently said that the women used to possess the *molimo*, but it was stolen from them by the men, and this dance, together with the tying up of the men by the old lady (Turnbull, *ibid.*, p. 323), may well represent in part this early conflict, and the attempt of the women to regain possession of the *molimo*. Whatever the symbolism, it is nowhere clearly stated by the Mbuti, each individual claiming to see something different in the performance. It is generally agreed, however, that it shows how strong the women are, and that they have to be respected by men.

Whether or not there is thought to be any correlation with *pepo* (breath), the power of breath to fan sparks into fire is demonstrated when coals are placed in the end of the *molimo* trumpet. The singer blows as he sings, and the sparks that fly out of the end of the trumpet are greeted by murmurs or even shouts of acclaim.

The trumpet is sometimes referred to as an "animal" of the forest, though this is generally in connection with its morning appearance. Nonetheless it is referred to as needing food and water, and these it symbolically receives. It is also passed through the *molimo* fire and

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765 372 534 given fire to eat, just as water is passed through it to "cool" it. It is rubbed with ashes and earth. It is brought into direct contact with every individual by being passed over their heads as they sit around the fire singing, and each individual will at some time or another, at his own whim, scoop up ashes and rub the trumpet with them. And in the evening appearances of the trumpet at the *molimo* hearth, while the singer holds one end to his mouth and sings, the youth holding the far end pumps it up and down as he dances in imitation of the sexual act, sometimes holding the mouth of the trumpet close to his genitals, imitating the part of either man or woman. Little doubt is left about the symbolic connection between fire and life.[9]

765 561 533 There is an important distinction between the evening and the morning appearances of the *molimo* trumpet, and between the roles played by different age groups. In the evening the singing is primarily in control of the *mangesé*, or elders. Frequently, they have their own fire, the hunters have theirs, and the *kiyana*, or male youths, have theirs. Everyone joins in the singing, the elders maintaining over-all control and the hunters being the most prominent singers, except for the *molimo*-trumpet singer, who may be a youth or a young hunter, being chosen because of his ability as a singer rather than for any other reason. It is the youths that do most of the dancing at their fire or at the central *molimo* fire (from which theirs is made by taking burning embers and setting them separately). The whole intent of the evening is to rejoice the forest, and this is done by singing throughout the night, and by eating a feast specially prepared from food contributed to the *molimo* hearth. (Just as with food, so with firewood and with fire itself—every single household in the camp is expected to contribute.) In the early days of the festival the old lady does not appear, and there is no attempt to stamp out the fire, though erotic dances are constantly being danced around and over it. It is only toward the end of the festival that the nightlong songfest is dramatized by the appearance of the old lady, her dancing through the fire in an attempt to destroy it, and her tying up of the men (referred to as both tying up the hunt and tying up the *molimo*). The evening meetings of the *molimo*, though full of the joy the Mbuti wish to convey to the forest, are nonetheless solemn in that the purpose is

[535] [831] [535] [831] [535] [765]

[831] [9] Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus the association of the male *molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context. Elsewhere, this precise symbolism seems unimportant, the important factor being simply the trumpet's masculinity.

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Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing, feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea* may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers, fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*, may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears, some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death, just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant, if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed, is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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Opposite: Asofalinda's eldest daughter being painted with *kangey* juice for a wedding.

Akidinimba (in hat) celebrates her forthcoming wedding with the other girls of the *elima*.

[P 72-G]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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would come from Cephu's camp, for the amount of interest that Cephu showed in the molimo was a topic for constant discussion and criticism. Masimongo, who had relatives in Cephu's camp, always upheld him when he did not appear himself or when his little group made a poor showing. But Manyalibo allowed no such excuses, and his voice carried much more weight. He said, good conservative that he was, that all men should take part in the molimo regardless of what camp they belonged to, if they were anywhere near at all. Then he went through the mime showing what would have happened in the old days, to anyone who did not attend and was found sleeping. I thought momentarily of Kenge.

But the molimo was not only a matter of singing late into the night. Each morning, too, there was activity, though of a different nature. The evenings were serious, the older men taking the lead in the singing and leaving the dancing largely to the younger men. Sometimes there was a lot of horseplay, but the older men, like Moke, kept an eye on what was going on and held the youngsters in check. Often the molimo fire was made into two fires, the older men sitting at one and the youngsters at the other, and then all the dancing went on at the youths' fire while the elders sat at theirs and just sang, and watched their sons with dreamy eyes.

But in the mornings the youths came into their own completely. Before the first glimmer of light filtered through into the camp, those of us who had managed to get to sleep were waked by a violent and raucous trumpeting from just outside the camp. This brought cries of protest from the older men. Some of them appeared sleepily at the entrance to their huts and shouted, "Animal! Go away and keep quiet and let me sleep!" but to no avail. From the far end of the camp, near the path leading to Cephu's clearing, a wild cavalcade of youths swept into view, shouting and yelling, clustered so thickly that it was impossible to see the trumpet they were carrying. But it was there, with Amabosu blowing it. It blasted and shrilled and

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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123 765 562 825 expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up, pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest"; every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals; every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted, and about which only I was ignorant.

765 533 535 781 It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

825 765 534 The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

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go between the camp and the hunt, if they are not too far apart, bringing news to and fro.

As soon as the hunters return they deposit the meat on the ground, and the camp gathers to make sure the division is fair. Nobody acknowledges that it is, but in the end everyone is satisfied. Cooking operations start at once and within an hour everyone is eating. If the hunt has been a good one, and the day is still young, the most energetic men and women dance immediately afterward, followed by the children. In the course of such a dance they imitate, with suitable exaggeration, the events of the day. If the hunt has not been so good, or a man is tired and does not feel like dancing, he will sit down and gather his family around him and tell them something that has happened to him on the hunt, something wonderful and exciting, but which naturally happened while nobody else was looking.

Since Pygmies are blessed with a lively imagination, these stories grow until it is difficult to tell the difference between what is meant to be a straight, factual account and a traditional legend. And there is always the element of the two-way process in which fact becomes legend, and legend becomes accepted, through constant repetition, as fact.

The dream world of the Pygmies is a very real one, full of hidden meaning and significance. There is one story that Cephu is still fond of telling, and he still tells it in almost exactly the same way as he did six years earlier when I first heard it.

He had been into the village for a short visit, and we all knew he had gone empty-handed. Yet when he returned a few days later he brought a sizable load of plantains and rice with him. Everyone asked him who he had stolen it from. Cephu, with a great smile spreading across his face, sat down and waited for his audience to settle down. With his wife and his children close behind him, and his friends all around, Cephu sat simply on the ground in his most charming and bewitching way, old rascal that he was, even then. He looked up

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was given special recognition by Moke, who offered him his chair and then sat on the ground beside him. Old Tungana seemed to know him well too. The elders—the *mangese*, the Great Ones—formed a tight cluster of their own, apart from the hunters. The hunters formed their own group, and the youths theirs. The youths and a few of the hunters danced, and we were surrounded by women and girls who watched and joined the songs with handclaps. The girls formed their own dance circles, but they seemed to be dancing with much more purpose than on other nights, and they were allowed to stay up much later. Then they were sent to bed, and the singing began in earnest. All the girls who had danced went into Kondabate's hut, and as they opened the leaf door to enter I saw that the old woman was sitting inside, hunched up over the fire, her eyes as bright as the coals, wide and unblinking.

The singing went on particularly late that night, and it was only an hour after Moke's usual statement that he was tired that we were awakened by the blasting of both molimo trumpets as they entered the camp. I got up hurriedly and saw that Kenge was already gone. At the door of my hut someone ran up in the dusk and pushed me back, telling me not to come out, it was too dangerous. Just as he said this, there was a tremendous blow on top of the hut, and the molimo swept by. It was surrounded by at least twenty youths, all, as far as I could see, carrying long branches with which they beat on the roofs and walls of every hut. They continued this for an hour, the trumpets blaring angrily, the youths making loud hunting cries. As the forest grew lighter I could see that all the youths were decorated with leafy branches stuck in their belts, so that it looked as though each trumpet was surrounded by a little forest of its own.

Quite a number of huts had been damaged, but there was no word of protest. Ekianga danced up and down with a spear under each arm and ran rings around the trumpets. I was more impressed than ever by the high-stepping gait that he and everyone else used. They did

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765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
372 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

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an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great headdress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than

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765 562 142 [292] ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

765 562 832 [304] Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

765 562 533 After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent molimo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

765 562 535 [534]

this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those of Kondabate.

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken.

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un-

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765 observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced
562 the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She
• 535 advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back,
533 her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster,
372 but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the
765 ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the
562 fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to
535 her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there,
372 staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down.
[533] Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were out in front. Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and

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would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

"And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been. The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it with love. When *some of the youngsters began to dance Moke* shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return for what they had given away they had received generous portions of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and children retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing. They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped. They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground, they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around, faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil-

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765 534 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud beaten from walls.

765 533 781 [513] There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their dancing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house.

765 781 535 534 372 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire. It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliberately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it. [276] He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

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camp resounded to songs of joy and praise, accompanied by the ringing of the ngbengbe sticks as they were clapped together in complex cross rhythms by boys and girls alike. Every night Masisi told his group, which had steadily grown ever since the beginning, stories about the past. And every night we went to bed content, knowing that the morrow would be even better; for each day we discovered fresh growths of mushrooms, trees full of different kinds of nuts, and each night the chameleon gave its long, sad cry, to tell us that on the morrow we would have more honey.

One night in particular will always live for me, because that night I think I learned just how far away we civilized human beings have drifted from reality. The moon was full, so the dancing had gone on for longer than usual. Just before going to sleep I was standing outside my hut when I heard a curious noise from the nearby children's bopi. This surprised me, because at nighttime the Pygmies generally never set foot outside the main camp. I wandered over to see what it was.

There, in the tiny clearing, splashed with silver, was the sophisticated Kenge, clad in bark cloth, adorned with leaves, with a flower stuck in his hair. He was all alone, dancing around and singing softly to himself as he gazed up at the treetops.

Now Kenge was the biggest flirt for miles, so, after watching a while, I came into the clearing and asked, jokingly, why he was dancing alone. He stopped, turned slowly around and looked at me as though I was the biggest fool he had ever seen; and he was plainly surprised by my stupidity.

"But I'm *not* dancing alone," he said. "I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon." Then, with the utmost unconcern, he ignored me and continued his dance of love and life.

As the weeks went by, however, a note of dissatisfaction stirred in the camp. Masisi began to complain that the others, including Manyalibo, were way off to the north getting meat, yet they had

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621 of me. Masisi, still breathing fire and fury about the treachery of his relatives, came to visit us from time to time; otherwise he kept strictly to his own camp.

221 621 And so, after the Pygmies had taken advantage of the one season they know, a season which allows them to forget about the cares of communal hunting and the need for constant co-operation, the camp was beginning to come together again. Every year this splitting up takes place, and every year the forest draws its people back together. Whatever frictions had existed were soon healed; a new year was about to begin. Before this camp ended, Masisi would have found some excuse to move a little farther north. Ekianga was already talking of shifting a few hundred yards south, and Cephu would make up his mind to jump this way or that. Everyone knew it, and within a week of arriving at Apa Kadiketu they were talking about where they would build their next camp, and how it would be one camp again—until the next honey season.

114 But I would never know that next camp, so I made the most of my last home in the forest, sharing it as always with a good and constant friend. Maliamo set up house in Masisi's camp, and sometimes Kenge stayed there, sometimes in the main camp. At all times the forest was full of the song and dance of life. The games special to 221 the honey season filled the daylight hours and at dusk there was the 524 dance of the honeybees. Tremendous vine swings were slung from 526 the highest branches, and on these the youths practiced their acrobatics, leaping and somersaulting in the air. When a vine broke it was used for interminable games of tug of war, men against women. But there was a conspicuous lack of gallantry in this particular game, for if either side saw that it was losing ground it sent a saboteur into the other ranks. It is difficult to concentrate on pulling at a line 221 when someone is flirting with you—as Pygmies do. But best of all • 535 was the dance. Once again the men and the women divided, and

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while the men pretended to be honey gatherers, dancing in a long curling line through the camp, looking up with exaggerated gestures as if searching for some sign of bees, the women danced in another long line through the trees at the edge of the camp, pretending they were the bees. The two lines gradually came closer and closer together, the women singing in a soft, rhythmic buzz, buzz, buzz, while the men pretended to hear but still not to see them. Then the women seized burning logs of wood and attacked the men, tapping the logs on their heads so that a shower of sparks fell over them, stinging them like the sting of the honeybee. At that they all gathered up the embers, and where some of the younger men had been building an elaborate hearth of special woods and special leaves, moistened to just the right extent, they lit the great honey fire. There was no flame, but dense clouds of smoke billowed upward. Men blew on their honey whistles, women clapped their hands, and everyone burst into the song of magic that would travel with the smoke and call the bees to come and make more honey.

On such occasions I found that Masisi and Cephu made their appearance more and more often, paving the way for a reunion at the next camp. When the time came for me to leave all animosities had been forgotten.

One day Kenge had gone off on some unknown mission and I decided to make a final pilgrimage to Apa Lelo, where the cycle had begun. This day of all days I wanted to be by myself, but there is something about the forest, *not exactly threatening, but challenging,* that dares you to travel alone. I had to refuse several Pygmies who wanted to come with me, and once I was well away I was glad. I knew what the challenge was, for to be alone was as though you were daring to look on the face of the great God of the Forest himself, so overpowering was the goodness and beauty of the world all around. Every trembling leaf, every weathered stone, every cry of an animal

177 574 [296] may come in every evening. They will leave a couple of old men to stay behind in the camp as guards, smoking hashish, and the rest will go into the village, usually around four o'clock in the afternoon, after the day's hunting is over. From then until dark a few pygmies are usually to be seen hanging about the women's quarters. If a white man arrives, however, they quickly disappear, through fear that he will confiscate their antelope or any other game that they may have brought with them.

[207] These mass visits are made particularly if it is going to be a moonlit night, and if wine drinking is going on. If there is a moon they will say and dance; if not, they will come home [535] at dark. The Negroes give them wine in a condescending way, and the pygmies put on what the Negros consider to be wild, barbaric dances

439 [361] Sometimes the pygmy camp is as much as two days' journey from the village. In this case, the pygnies go in seldom, and browbeat their vives to make them go in to get plantains.

A visitor to a Negro village can nearly always see bunches of plantains lying around on the ground; thy have been placed there for the pygmies, who pick them up and carry them home. There is no need for any special bargaining or designation; the pygmies know which bunches are for them.

177 439 571 **Pygmy attitudes toward their Negroes.**—The pygmies consider themselves inseparably attached to their hosts and think it their duty to provide them with meat. Although they feel that they are supposed to turn over all honey and elephant meat, in each case they eat all they can before taking it [251] into the village. They never preserve or store any food. Their duty of feeding the Negroes meat is therefore regarded as somewhat of a nuisance. On the other hand, when the pygmy

521 than the Negroes, who are, in turn,
157 more talkative than whites. In this
571 regard—amount of interaction expressed in speech—the pygmies are about on a level with white men. There
517 is little chance for extensive conversa-
521 tions during the daytime while out
571 hunting, and hence the talking time is during the evening, when they have come home and are sitting in front of their huts, provided that they are not dancing.

At this talking time, each family sits around the entrance of its hut, using short butts of logs as seats. Dusk falls. They talk to each other across the circle, from hut to hut. Everyone can hear everyone else, so it is group interaction, even when one person is addressing one other specifically.

Their subjects of conversation are simple; they discuss what they have been doing that day, and in some cases they talk a little about what they plan to do tomorrow. Every now and then someone makes a joke about how a certain man was clumsy at handling his net during the day's hunt. Some
[157] people are quiet, others are noisier. Some men are clowns, habitually cracking jokes at the expense of others.

After bed time comes and the various families crawl into their huts to sleep, they get little uninterrupted rest, as they will keep chattering well into the night. Many of them will get up in the night, make water and have a smoke, and chat with others doing the same. There is almost always someone up, someone talking.

517 **Dancing.**—The pygmies will dance
• 535 almost any night when the weather is clear, and if there is a full moon they will dance most of the night. Sometimes they stamp on the ground, or on a hollow log, but when they can beg or borrow a drum from the Negroes, they will beat on that.

[P. 334-A]